
MAXIE'S CHALLENGE

Seven months into the Maxie Challenge, and I can say this: It's not as hard as I thought it would be. I'm not saying it's easy. And some days are easier than others. But all in all, I can live with the new way of eating and moving. And I'm loving the payoff.

Part of the reason it hasn't been as hard as I thought it would be is that I still eat what I like—I just eat a little less of some things and more from the fruits and vegetables category. And when you get right down to it, how much you put on your plate is mostly a habit, and I can see now that my habits have changed.

And it is *all* just habits, whether it's a habit of choosing grilled chicken over the fried version, or choosing a short walk before I plop down in front of the television for the night. Here's a Maxie Challenge: Try the healthy choice just one time. Instead of reaching for a candy bar, grab an apple. Then, if you're still hungry, you can still chow down on the candy bar. I tried this approach for a while, and eventually it became automatic to reach for the healthy snack first. I rarely want to eat a candy bar in addition to my apple.

But let's be honest: I wouldn't

do this if there wasn't something in it for me. And there is. I just feel better. There's a spring in my step I haven't had in several years. I have a lot more energy even though I'm sure not getting any younger. I have fewer aches and pains when I wake up. And I when I feel good, I'm happier.

I've found only one downside to my new lifestyle. Anyone who knows me well knows I've always

hated shopping, especially for clothes. I'm not what you'd call a standard size. And since I've slimmed down, my old shirts and pants hang on me. So I'll be going to the mall in July, when all the summer clothes start going on sale. But I've already got it planned out, and I've changed my attitude about shopping as well: I'll get the bonus of a nice walk *in the air conditioning!*



Maxie's trip to the grocery store just got a whole lot greener. Fruits and vegetables dominate his grocery list. Now he's making plans to go shopping for clothes — in smaller sizes.